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the greatest diplomat of Europe. In but one matter do I find reason for criticism. M. de la Gorce would have strengthened his discussion of the relation of Piedmont to the Crimean War had he dwelt more in detail upon the policy of resistance adopted by the Piedmontese ministry, especially by Dabormida, Minister of Foreign Affairs. He does not make it clear that Dabormida's hostility to Cavour was based on sound argument and not on merely conservative prejudices. Dabormida wanted guarantees, and would not follow Cavour until Austria promised to respect the independence and freedom of Piedmont, and this Austria would not do. In fact, Cavour's boldness, which history would condemn had he failed, led him at times to commit breaches of international courtesy as well as of international law. To drive Dabormida from his position in the ministry in order that he might fill it himself may have been necessary for Italian unity, but it was not officially honorable.

M. de la Gorce offers us, however, few opportunities for criticism. So well has he done his work, so skilfully has he followed the intricate mazes of European diplomacy, so successfully has he concealed his own predilections and party sympathies, — if he have any, — that we have at last a history of the first years of the régime of Napoleon III. that may be read with confidence and satisfaction. It is not surprising that the work, which has already passed into a second edition, should have been crowned by the French Academy and have received the *prix Alfred Née*.

CHARLES M. ANDREWS.

Mémoires du Duc de Persigny. Publiés avec des Documents inédits, un Avant-Propos, et un Épilogue, par H. DE LAIRE, Comte D'ESPAGNY. (Paris: E. Plon, Nourrit et Cie. 1896. Pp. xx, 512.)

PERSIGNY'S is a name now almost forgotten, but in his day he played no small part in the affairs of the Second Empire. Born a Royalist, he became converted to Imperialism, and participated with Louis Napoleon in the Strassburg and Boulogne episodes. For the last he was condemned to twenty years' imprisonment, but was released in 1848. Beginning with 1849 he was a member of the Legislative Assembly, minister to Berlin, senator, twice minister to England, and twice Secretary of the Interior. The result of the elections of 1863 rendered it advisable that he should resign this portfolio, and soon after his retirement from the cabinet he was created a duke; he continued a member of the privy council, to which he had been appointed in 1858. For fourteen years Persigny rendered a devoted service to Napoleon III., while during the last seven years of the Empire he was utterly neglected by his former master. During this retirement he composed, between November, 1867, and March, 1869, these Memoirs, which are not memoirs in the strict sense of the term, but rather a series of detached studies or essays on the politics of the twenty years

following Louis Napoleon's election to the presidency of the Second Republic.

Persigny died in January, 1872, and as none of the persons mentioned in the Memoirs are now living, except the Empress Eugénie, the editor, who was the author's private secretary, judged that the time had come when these writings might fittingly be published. But, frankly, the world has got on very well for twenty-four years without them, and a careful perusal leads one to think that it might have done without them for at least twenty-four years more. For it cannot well be urged that any new light is thrown on unsolved problems, or that very much is added to what was already known of the Napoleonic régime.

Persigny occupied positions which peculiarly qualified him to make many important revelations concerning the government, and yet he either treats with extreme brevity, or else passes over in absolute silence, many of the important topics of the two groups into which the leading events of the period fall,—internal corruption and mismanagement, and the attempted brilliant, though often disastrous, foreign policy of the Empire. On one subject Persigny felt strongly and wrote at considerable length: the attitude of France in the Austro-Prussian relations of 1866; this is one of the most suggestive and instructive portions of his narrative.

His omissions are almost fatal, especially if we include, as may fairly be done, those subjects which are but barely referred to; such as the *coup d'état*, the Italian war, French acquisitions in Asia, interference in Mexico, and the like. The "*documents inédits*," mentioned on the title-page, are few and unimportant.

In spite of its omissions and defects, the book is not without merit. Though the writer hardly conveys to the reader an adequate idea of the extent to which the administration of the country was corrupt, he does, in one of his most important chapters, put his finger upon the fundamental cause of the evil,—the highly centralized character of the system; and the evil is no less patent under the Third Republic than it was under the Second Empire. So, again, Persigny regarded as one of the main reasons for his loss of influence, as well as for the internal misgovernment of the country, the interference of the empress. A very interesting insight into the nature of the influence which she exerted is given in a long letter he sent the emperor, in 1867, concerning her presence at the meetings of the council. The empress resented the advice, but evidently was convinced of its justice, since it was not long afterwards that she ceased to attend.

In his estimate of men and of events, Persigny looks constantly through Imperialist spectacles; but his bias is so evident that one scarcely needs to be put on one's guard. Even though writing while in retirement and disfavor, he still remains the devoted supporter of Napoleon III. To the very last he was ready to offer his services, which were coldly refused. Occasionally, however, he indicates some of Napoleon's faults, such as his "*indécision d'esprit*," his "*indolence de caractère*," and his "*impuissance à dominer son entourage*."

In a word, then, this book makes but a slight positive contribution to knowledge, while its chief interest and value consist in its occasional revelations of the inner workings of the empire of Napoleon III. Though written by a partisan, it scarcely increases our admiration or respect for that monarch.

CHARLES F. A. CURRIER.

Ironclads in Action; A Sketch of Naval Warfare from 1855 to 1895, with some Account of the Development of the Battle-ship in England. By H. W. WILSON. With an introduction by Captain A. T. Mahan, U.S.N. (London: Sampson Low, Marston and Company. Boston: Little, Brown and Co. 1896. Two vols., pp. xxix, 357, xvi, 374.)

A VALUABLE mass of information has been placed before the naval world in this excellent work. Its two volumes comprise over 700 pages, with many handsome illustrations, and as it is quite free from padding, the amount of interesting facts and incidents it contains is most satisfactory. Its merit is enhanced by an introduction from the pen of Captain Mahan, which is in itself a professional contribution worthy of its author as well as a model of literary style.

Mr. Wilson departs but rarely from the attitude of narrator to take up that of critic or judge. In the few instances in which he does so, his deductions are clear and well considered, and the reader sometimes wishes that he had permitted himself more space for detailed argument concerning the principles of naval warfare. His style is characterized by simplicity and exactness—traits that are especially attractive in a narrative of military and naval affairs.

It is not to be expected in so long a narrative as this that Mr. Wilson should be able to weigh all the evidence presented. It is enough for him if the sources of information are of good repute. This has caused him to undervalue ramming in future conflicts, basing his opinions on those of Mr. Laird Clowes, who has presented certain facts as to ramming quite clearly, but whose deductions do not receive the unanimous assent of naval officers. There are but few advocates of the ram who look for results of importance from its use in single-ship encounters. It is with fleets at close quarters that the ram's supreme function will be exercised, and at such a time questions of extreme speed, armor, and heavy guns will be little regarded compared with quickness in turning and the presence on board of a resolute commander.

The author notes that high-angle fire was of little avail in the reduction of the forts on the Mississippi, and that, though the mortar vessels discharged bombs until the ammunition ran short, for all practical purposes Fort Jackson remained intact. This remark attracts attention at the present time when so much of our harbor defence rests upon the efficiency of mortar fire, though it must be remembered that great advance has been